

# Friends of STOCKER'S LAKE



## NEWSLETTER

*Issue Number 85*

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR, Nigel Daley

Dear Member

It has been an odd last 6 months, we had all hoped that by now there would be some light at the end of the tunnel, however there is clearly the need for some caution over the future months/period. With this in mind it has been a pity that all of our Spring and Summer events have had to be cancelled. There was a slight chink of light at this end of the dark tunnel with Sunday work parties starting up on the first Sunday of September, albeit as a very much smaller scale event than we have been used to over the last 12 months.

Unfortunately for us, over the Summer, our Work Party Volunteer Organiser, Emma Brading got a new job in London and has had to step down from her FoSL role. Whilst we are all sad to see Emma move on, we are hopeful that she will come back and visit us from time to time when her commitments allow. Emma has been a marvellously organised breath of youthful fresh air - big thanks to her for everything she has done for FoSL. Bob Sherren, our 'Cattle/bovine Organiser' has offered to take over this role. However, as a result of the present pandemic, we are having to keep work party numbers down to a bare minimum for the foreseeable future, with the recognition that we may need to cancel them at very short notice. If you are thinking of coming along to any of this season's work parties, please note we are adhering to a strict email booking system which Bob is organising. Please do contact Bob on [bob\\_sherren@hotmail.com](mailto:bob_sherren@hotmail.com) if you are wanting to get involved and remember work parties are the first Sunday of every month up until March/April. Please do bring drink your own flask or bottle.

I would like to pay tribute to Ian Watson, who until recently was our FoSL Warden and work party organiser. Ian has been an extremely active committee member over the last 30 years (somebody said that over the years, Ian has held every position on the FoSL Committee at some point in time and I can well believe it!). Ian has been the heart and soul of FoSL, a real get-go action man, an absolute top notch recruiter and general all round grafter. Without Ian, we may have struggled to get the three cattle Friends of Stocker's Lake is a registered charity No.1080501. It aims to support conservation at Stocker's Lake Local Nature Reserve.

meadows completed on time and (nearly!!) within budget. I and your committee will miss his infectious enthusiasm and we wish him all the best for the future.

On a similar note, Trish Jeneid retired from editing our newsletter this Spring after many years of service to FoSL and the birds at Stocker's Lake. Many thanks to Trish for her focussed attention to detail, with her gentle sense of fun and good humour performing a difficult and at times 'dirty job' so that we could 'go to press' with our newsletter.

I would like to take this opportunity to give a shout out for The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust who are busy updating the Stocker's Lake Management Plan for the next five year period. Josh Kalms ([Josh.Kalms@hmwt.org](mailto:Josh.Kalms@hmwt.org)) from The Trust, is asking for:-

Anyone who has direct experience of a family member having dementia or mobility issues with particular reference to Stocker's Lake to get in touch with him. All of us that walk Stocker's to pay particular attention to the Lifebuoys around the lake. If you notice any missing, please let Josh know so that Affinity can replace them ASAP.

All of us to be vigilant with regard to keeping an eye out for vandals since there has been a great deal of damage done around the lake this Spring and Summer.

May I ask a favour of all members. Some of you will know that we have cancelled both of our Recruitment weekends this year (June and September) due to the current pandemic which in real terms, will have cost Friends of Stocker's Lake anything north of 60 new members. If between now and the end of the year, every 5<sup>th</sup> member encouraged a friend or family member to join our ranks we would more than double our yearly recruitment of new members. Membership is relatively cheap and we do an awful lot with every £5 membership subs and our volunteers give huge amounts of their time.

All new members have to do is go online to:- <http://www.fosl.org.uk/index.php/online-membership-form>

and follow the on screen instructions. This year and next will be tough years for most charities and any help that you can give will be really appreciated and thank you for your continued support of FoSL.

Please remember to check out our website for news and updates to events/meetings etc.  
[www.fosl.org.uk](http://www.fosl.org.uk).

## TERN RAFTS Dick Beeden



We have been investigating the possible purchase of a new tern raft. Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust is using an interesting design which they have shared with us, see picture above. They have told us that the rafts have proved very attractive to Black-headed Gulls, Coots, Moorhens, Oystercatcher, Canada and Greylag Goose as well as terns. The design is easily movable and can be placed on the water as the first terns arrive back on migration. After the breeding season some rafts were pulled close into the shoreline and the nesting substrate removed, others were taken out of the water completely. The rafts (fibreglass) were designed to be split in half to keep the weight down, so that two people could lift the platform out of the water and they are easily towed out by a small boat.

So as not to spoil the view over the lake the platforms were designed to sit quite low in the water - the height being adjusted by the amount of gravel put on them. They are basically an upturned saucer shape, with flotation pods underneath filled with polystyrene block with drainage holes to keep the substrate dry. The rafts were anchored by four simple mud weights from each corner, with hanging 'angels' on the ropes to keep them below the surface.

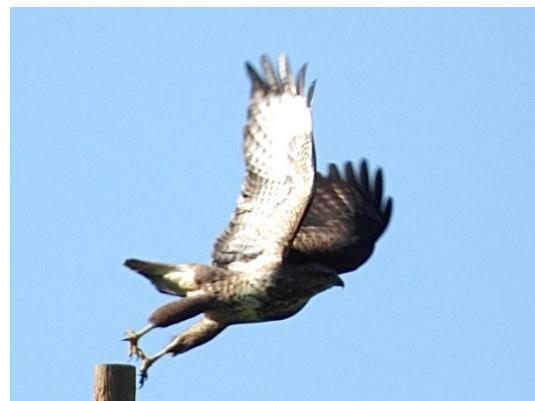
Joined together they make a nest platform of 4 square metres, with a sloping skirt which deflects wave action and stops 'wave slap' with its consequent spray onto the nesting area and also stops the rafts rock violently in windy weather. The sloping sides also helps if a chick falls off the raft, it could climb back up.

## EVENTS ON THE RESERVE

### BIRD REPORT Steve Carter Wildlife Recorder

March arrived with restricted birding owing to Covid with no list in the hides at month's end. The first swallow was seen in April and a cuckoo was heard calling at Cook's Wood opposite Stocker's farm. Here wader passage on the flooded field provided Ruff, Dunlin and 2 Little Ringed Plovers. Rain arrived at the end of April followed by hailstones and heavy showers in May, however a Whimbrel and 4 Wood Sandpipers were spotted which was fantastic. Summer progressed in July with heavy vandalism and poor public behaviour which blighted the reserve. Oystercatchers and Common Sandpipers were seen in July with a single Barnacle goose. A few Hobby were present in August and at month's end 2 Raven were seen over the west side of Stocker's. Finally Common Buzzard feeding a juvenile above Stocker's farm was a breeding record.

#### Common Buzzards





## WILDFLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES

Linda Ascroft, Events Co-ordinator

Due to Covid the Wildflower and Butterfly and Dragonfly walks unfortunately had to be cancelled. However, to keep our wildflower records up to date, Janet Lowndes and Linda Ascroft took a walk around Stockers Lake and the close environs. The results of their findings are posted on the FoSL website. [www.fosl.org.uk](http://www.fosl.org.uk). Similarly, Rob and Alex Liddle walked our usual route, close to Stocker's Lake and along part of the River Colne, to see how many different butterflies and dragonflies could be found. Their findings are also posted on the FoSL website for you see. We look forward to welcoming you back to our walks in 2021



Marsh Woundwort



White Bryony



Meadow Rue

## NEW MEMBER'S RECRUITMENT

Russell Ball FoSL Recruitment

At our recent FoSL Committee meeting it was decided to postpone - due to Covid - the Autumn/Winter Recruitment Days for this year. We will, for sure, reconvene these next year to build on our 643 membership base. **In the meantime, leading up to the end of the year and our membership renewal in early 2021, it would be great if you could get a relative, friend and neighbour to join us.**

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

WORKING PARTIES Bob Sherren

We would welcome any members who would like to get more involved in practical conservation work. The work parties last about 2½ hours. Please bring wellies/boots, strong gloves and also garden cutters if you can and your own refreshments.

Please email [bob\\_sherren@hotmail.com](mailto:bob_sherren@hotmail.com) if you would like to be involved on the following dates as there is limited space owing to Covid restrictions.

Sunday 4th October 2020  
Sunday 1st November 2020  
Sunday 6th December 2020  
All start at 09.55am

**Meet:** usually at the Fisherman's car park (next to the wooden bridge from Inns Lake)

## TREASURER'S REPORT year ending 31.12.19

These are the audited accounts I would have presented at the AGM had it not been cancelled due to Covid.

Figures for the year ending 31 December 2019 are below alongside 2018 figures. Figures in brackets below also refer to 2018 for comparison.

Gross income for 2019 overall was much higher than in 2018 because of the grant from Groundwork Trust of almost £13,000 being their share of the fencing for the cattle. Otherwise income was up by about £300 reflecting about an additional 30 members. Gift Aid refund at about £1,200 remained about the same as in 2018. Paid up membership increased to 657 from 633.

Expenditure more than doubled to about £29,723 (£14,714) mainly due to spending of some £26,000 on fencing the three meadows in order to graze cattle. Administration and other costs stayed broadly the same as in 2018. Our third party liability insurance with Zurich for working parties and walks in particular remained competitive at £289.

In summary FoSL's accumulated funds as at 31 Dec 2019 stood at £15,128 (£24,745), down about £9,600 on 2018 as the cattle project got underway.

Thanks are due to Rachel Rooker FCCA of Acumist Lower Rd, Chorleywood for kindly scrutinising FoSL's financial records for 2019 pro bono.

Some figures for this year so far.

Income is currently approx £8,000 with 635 paid up members with balances standing at about £22,500. This compares favourably with last year. So far this year we have spent only about £1,800 due in the main to restrictions placed on our activities by Covid

Anyone who last paid in 2017 had until 30 Sept to respond after which they were removed from the mailing list.

There are no proposals to change the subscription for this year or 2021

### HELP REQUIRED

The Committee is looking for a Secretary

Any volunteers out there?

Please contact Nigel Daley, our Chairman

\*\*\*\*\*Stop Press\*\*\*\*\*

Water Vole spotted recently off the bank of the River Colne, last seen travelling in a southerly direction towards the Dexter cattle

\*\*\*\*\*Stop Press\*\*\*\*\*

## LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

If you enjoy nature, a legacy can ensure the future of our wonderful reserve. Please consider leaving a Gift to Friends of Stocker's Lake in your Will. There are inheritance tax advantages of leaving a legacy to a Charity.

## FOSL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<i>Nigel Daley (Chairman)</i>	<i>01923 282844</i>
<i>Jack Westbrook (Lead Warden)</i>	<i>07716 296093</i>
<i>Dick Beeden (Treasurer &amp; Membership)</i>	<i>0208 4219958</i>
<i>Larry Hurst (Fundraiser, Publicity)</i>	<i>01923 848440</i>
<i>Simon Jones (Web Site)</i>	<i>01923 285763</i>
<i>Linda Ascroft (Events organiser)</i>	<i>07791 971323</i>
<i>Susan Thomas (Newsletter editor)</i>	<i>01923 240764</i>
<i>Russell Ball (Membership recruitment)</i>	<i>07884 426671</i>
<i>Bob Sherren (Volunteers organiser)</i>	<i>07929 394120</i> <a href="mailto:bob_sherren@hotmail.com">bob_sherren@hotmail.com</a>
<i>Steve Carter (Wildlife recorder)</i>	<i>07917 796976 Text preferred</i>